

there at Dover when the casket comes home. Is that too much to ask? I mean, is it really? Would it be that much trouble to make it possible for a family to go when their loved one's coming home? The President said we cannot have any pictures and it will just confuse the public; the public cannot handle it.

The United States population does not need to be hidden from the truth, and the truth is that the foreign fighter argument from Syria is phony, and they are going to use that. If they do not go into Syria or create some kind of a coup or something in the next few weeks, I will be very surprised.

On the other side of Iraq, you have Iran. I think I talked out here on the floor before, but Iran is primarily a Shiite country. It is not all Shiite, but it is primarily Shiite, as is the southern part of Iraq, which has been a back and forth flow of people for a long time. Many of the issues that arise out of this whole confederation idea are troublesome because the Arabs who live in Iraq say you are going to give the control of this country to the Persians, Iraqis and Persians.

We do not think in those terms. We do not know about that kind of stuff. We are such a hodgepodge in this country. We look at somebody and we think, well, maybe I can figure out if that person is Irish or Polish. If there is an African American, I do not know if they came from Africa or the West Indies. If we hear a Hispanic voice, we do not know where they came from. We have no idea. But in these countries, where for 1,000 years they have lived in the same place, they know where everybody is from, and they know who has responsibility for what and so forth.

We now have manufactured this business about nuclear weapons. This is the United States. We have more nuclear weapons than the whole world put together by a factor of 10, and we suddenly get up on our high horse and say you cannot have any nuclear power, because we know if you get nuclear power, you are going to go and make weapons. We have talked about that, and why do we not let the United Nations inspectors go in?

The United Nations inspector Mr. Al Baredai, he won the Nobel Peace Prize. He is the guy who went into Iraq and said I cannot find any weapons. We said we are going to have to go to war anyway. We would not accept the judgment of the United Nations that there were not weapons of mass destruction. The President had decided that the best way to confuse and scare the American people was with the threat that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and was going to be an imminent danger to us within 24 hours. So he was going to drive that idea, whether the inspectors found it or not. In fact, he was not going to let the inspectors there long enough so that they could at some point give a clean bill of health on that particular issue. He simply would not allow it.

What we are facing now today is that we now have the possibility of going into Iran because we say they are developing nuclear power. We have nuclear power plants all over this country, all over this country. Why can they not make electricity out of nuclear power?

We do not want weapons. Sure, we can deal with the weapons part, but how about having a nuclear power industry? We are not saying people have to close down here in this country or that somehow the British cannot have it or the French and the German. Everybody else has nuclear power. Why can the Iranians not have it? Because we say they are going to use it to make weapons. Well, that may be true, but we have a mechanism by which we can monitor that, through the United Nations. Through the International Atomic Energy Agency, it can be monitored.

Where we stand today is that we have a situation, and I say this in summary, we have a situation where we have rammed through a Constitution in Iraq that both Iraqis and American conservatives are being convinced absolutely it will not work, to being very dubious about whether it will work. If that is where we are and we read in the newspaper, I bring this up because I want people to be thinking about when they read about Syria, why is Syria coming up? Why is Iran coming up? Why are we widening the war rather than pulling out and bringing our troops home?

I happen to be one of those who believes that we could be out of there by Christmas. There is no reason we could not. People say, oh, it will get worse. Get worse than what? Get worse than what is going on right now, where we are losing five Marines at a crack? I do not know how much worse you think it could be if we brought them home and let the Iraqis work it out themselves. They will find a way. They do not enjoy killing each other. That is not the Arab way.

The Arab way is to sit down and figure out a way that they can live in peace. They call it *atwa*. It is an arrangement that they establish between peoples, and they find ways to resolve these kinds of conflicts. It is foreign to us. We go to court. We are always going after somebody or we go militarily. The idea of sitting down and working it out, having a cease-fire and having a big peace conference in Iraq or in Jordan for that matter, with all the countries around, the Saudis do not want there to be a war. The Egyptians do not want a war. The Lebanese, the Syrians, the Turks, Iranians, none of the people around Iraq want this thing to continue to fester because the possibility of it boiling over into their people is very likely, and they are worried about that.

There is really a lot of cultural interests in bringing this thing to an end if the United States were to allow that to happen, but what is required? It is for the President to listen to what is going on in the world, and I take some hope.

The President has got one of his very trusted folks out. He has given her a new job at the State department, Ms. Karen Hughes. She went out on, I think they thought it was going to be a PR goodwill trip, and got an earful of what was going on out there. She came back with a wholly different view. She had been sitting in Washington, listening to all that goes on in the White House. Everybody's telling everybody, everything that is going is fine; everything's going wonderful; do not worry about a thing. Everything is going to get better tomorrow. She went out and find out how really bad it was.

When she came back, she brought a group of Arab negotiating women into the White House to meet with the President. That is how much things had changed. Imagine the President sitting down with a bunch of Arab women, talking about peace, about what is really going on out there?

This is not a situation that is going to be resolved with guns and military might. We have the best Armed Forces in the world. The people are the best. They are the best trained. They have the best equipment in most cases, if our military people pay attention and order stuff. We have the best and most powerful, but we cannot control the world that way. It will have to have a diplomatic aspect to it, which up to this point has not been there, and it is going to have to be there.

We cannot run Iraq as though it was a colony of the United States. There are 16 bases, which we have built, various sizes of installation. Why are we building permanent bases in Iraq if we want to get out?

It makes you wonder exactly what our plan for Iraq was. I do not think we have ever been told the truth about that, and I think that there are a lot of issues that will continue to come up and will lead us to have this Iraq Watch once a week on the Democratic side because we do not think that people on the other side really want to talk about the chaos and the problems it is causing us, both internally in the United States and externally, and the death and the cost. All of that needs to be discussed.

IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOHMERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I am motivated to come because of the comments made by the previous speaker, by an incident that happened today in my committee, and listening on TV to a previous speaker on Iraq.

All three of them, to the best of my knowledge, have not been to Iraq since the war, and yet, they profess to know so much about what is going on in Iraq. I have not quite understood why our colleague would go and meet with Saddam Hussein before the war and not

seek to understand and meet with our people in Iraq and the Iraqis after the war.

I voted to remove Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991 because I believed we could not allow Iraq, and Saddam Hussein in particular, to control 19 percent of the world's oil, the 10 percent that was in Iraq and the 9 percent in Kuwait, and then threaten over 40 percent of the world's oil in Saudi Arabia, the Arab Emirate, Qatar and even Iran. So even more than 40 percent. It is almost like a James Bond movie that we would somehow think that we would want that to happen.

People say it is all about oil. No. It is about our being able to light a room, heat a room, provide power in a hospital, to be able to move. Basically, it is about our lifeblood.

So we went in and removed Saddam, and we had an agreement, which he did not abide with for 12 years. In fact, we encircled Iraq, hoping, I guess, that he would eventually comply.

□ 2145

We had inspections that we sought to have him comply to, and he did not. At the time, we did not think he had a nuclear program; in fact, our CIA did not think he had it, and then his 2 sons-in-law went to Jordan and told us exactly where we would find his nuclear program. And then we were able to get Hans Blix and others to go to those areas and we found that he did, in fact, have a nuclear program. So our faith in the CIA, at least mine, sure was impacted significantly, frankly, by the failure of our people to know that, in fact, he had not just chemicals which he used on his own people.

I have been to Iraq 10 times since the removal of Saddam in 2003. I have spoken to Kurdish families that lost loved ones. They described to me how those killings took place. The helicopters flying over, the mists that they saw, their families that collapsed in utter pain. I have also seen the killing fields that existed courtesy of Saddam Hussein. Regretfully, we almost gave him a playroom in which to do these things, because we encircled him with a no-fly zone.

I voted to remove Saddam Hussein from power in 2002, and we did that in 2003 because, like President Bush, former President Clinton, Senator CLINTON, my 2 democratic senators, Senators DODD and LIEBERMAN, I believed he had weapons of mass destruction. I went to Hans Blix and asked him in his own country why Saddam wanted us to believe he had weapons of mass destruction. And he said, he wanted his neighbors to fear him and he said, he never believed that we would come in. I thought, that is kind of hard to believe. But then, when I thought about it, it is not hard to believe. He never thought we would remove him from Kuwait. He never thought we would do that, which is a real lesson that a military power that you have, as powerful as it is, if your

adversaries do not think you will use it, becomes a power you ultimately may use; whereas the threat of using it if they believe you will use it means that you can get a change in behavior.

But he also believed we would not attack because we learned that the Oil For Food program had enabled him basically, as the Dulfer Report says, yes, he said, no weapons of mass destruction, but then he said that in his interviews with Iraqi officials, that Saddam believed that he had the vote of France, Russia, and China because of the Oil For Food program, and because of the Security Council would not allow the United States to go in. Well, they did not. And he figured if France and Russia and China would not vote for us to go in, we would not go in. The President kept telling Saddam, cooperate, or we will come in. My wife would say to me, why is the President saying that? She said, I know he is going to do that. I said honey, he is not speaking to you, he is speaking to Saddam, because we do not want him to go in; we want him to comply.

Now, the bottom line is, we went in. And, in April 2003, being a Peace Corps volunteer and someone who was not in Vietnam and yet, here I am, of Vietnam age sending other troops to Iraq. I thought, well, what could I bring to the table? I realized that what I could bring is what I was trained in the Peace Corps to do: it is to understand their culture, understand how we are able to appreciate them, an Arab Nation, and to see how we could help them have the opportunity to decide for themselves ultimately how to rule their own country. In Mukasa, I was there in April 2003, and I think I was the first Member of Congress to go into Iraq; in fact, I know I was, and I had conversations with a number of people, but one of them was with a gentleman named Mohammed Abdul Hassan, and I said to him, what do we do that makes you uncomfortable. He said, when you throw candy on the ground and our children pick it up as if they are chickens or dogs. He said, when an Arab woman puts her hand to her heart, a Muslim woman, and your soldier is offended, when really she is saying, thank you for honoring me, but Muslim women do not shake hands with men, but particularly with strangers, and you are offended. You should not be offended. She is honoring you by saying, "thank you, but." And, at one point, which seemed a little out of character, he put his hands on my shoulders and looked at me and said, you do not know us and we do not know you.

Well, I could not wait to get back home, because when I go to Iraq, I do it for 3 reasons. I want to see firsthand what is happening so I am not looking at it through the press. Because when you look at it through the press, it is like you look at it through a little scope. It is wherever they focus attention. I wanted to learn firsthand, be-

cause I had learned from my concern about his having weapons of mass destruction that I wanted to know firsthand, not through other sources. I wanted to see for myself. But I also wanted to come back home to be able to tell my own government things that I think they needed to do. One of them was very clear as soon as I came back. I said to our own government, we need Iraqi-Americans there, and we need Arabic speakers.

Now, at that time, Iraq was under the control of the military and Mr. Bremmer, and I think they were insensitive to the cultural differences. I think that they did not pay attention to what the State Department had said about looting, about the need for Arab speakers.

The second time I went there, I went outside the umbrella of the military. I want to make this point. I went on my own. Well, actually, I went with some nongovernment organizations that enabled me to stay in Basra, meet with Iraqis, stay in Al Gut, meet with folks in Al Gut, go to Hanacan, Sulaymania, Irbul, speak to every day Iraqis, spend the night, talk to them. The second time I went there, I started hearing, why are you putting my father and my brother and my uncle out of work? Why are you doing that? What did they do? They did not know I was a Member of Congress; they thought I was evaluating the programs provided by these nongovernment organizations, and it was honest, that is what I was doing. I just did not tell them I also happened to be a Member of Congress.

They made such a strong case. They said, why can't we at least guard the hospitals. That rings in my ear, because we have lost 3 American soldiers in my district, the first one guarding the hospital, which is to acknowledge to my colleague who just spoke that we did make mistakes, huge mistakes, and we dug a deep hole.

We basically created a void because we disbanded their Army, their police, their Border Patrol, and their government. We put over 400,000 people out of work and, in the process, all of their family members became a bit angry. So we are talking about nearly 2 million Iraqis who were basically told by our government, you have no future role in Iraq.

And I say that and I wish the administration would acknowledge it, because rather than making me more concerned about where we are today, it makes me appreciate where we are today. If we were up here in April 2003 and were a little ahead or a little behind; we dug ourselves a huge hole by disbanding their Army, their police, and their Border Patrol. But when you see how far we were down, you realize now that we have come a long way. We, the Iraqi people, and we, the United States, in the incredible dedication of our troops, we lost nearly 2,000 Americans, but we have had over 14,000 who have been injured, and some of them quite severely.

The bottom line is, though, if you appreciate that we have come a long way from the hole we dug, you do see the progress that my colleague does not seem to want to see or acknowledge, which I think has been quite significant.

Another time I went to Iraq, I had one of Mr. Bremmer's people pull me aside and say, we do not have any resources. I only have one person here: me. And it is all centrally controlled. And we need money. I need at least 50 people. The Marines are leaving and they did kind of the work I was doing, interacting with the populace and the polls are coming in and they are not going to do it the same way. We need resources.

I came back and said, we need resources. I was a little shocked to find a month later that we saw tens of billions of dollars being added. A little resources was a lot more than I thought. And I do feel that if I had it to do over again, I would have wanted to have a clearer picture of the potential costs. I still would have been very strongly an advocate of going into Iraq, but I would have liked to have known the costs better. And that is one area when I look back and I say, why did I not try to determine those better.

Another time I went in, I met with our folks who take the weapons, the IEDs, the improvised explosive devices and they break them down, and I went and saw a room filled with hundreds of these tiny mechanisms. And the people that were there, there were about 2 to 3 of them, I know 2 in particular, and they said, we only have a handful of people. We need 50 to 100 folks to help us break these down. They were key chains, the keys that would open the door, they were the car door openers, they were timers in washing machines. They said, if we had more people we could break down where they were made, because we could identify the type of unit that is made to make these bombs and we would know where to go in Iraq. When I came back, I frankly asked to meet with the President and had an opportunity to share my concerns with the President and other officials about the need to get people in that area, which is to say that, and then that happened. We got those individuals. And we were able to break down a lot more of these weapons.

I believe, as I point out in other criticism, before I talk about some of the amazing things that have happened, I believe that if the White House had been more open to legislative oversight, and we in Congress had been more aggressive on legislative oversight, Abu Ghraib never would have happened, because this is what would have happened. One of us would have been in Abu Ghraib, and a soldier would have come up to us and probably use stronger language than I am going to use, and he or she would have said, I do not know a darn thing about overseeing prisoners. I am a cook. I am in

artillery. I do not know how to do it. By the way, Congressman, some pretty bad things are going on here by a few people. And we would have then raised questions, and it would have been looked into.

So one of the sad things from my standpoint is in summary, I wish that our military had listened more to what the State Department said would happen, which did: the looting, do not disband the Army, the police, or the military, or the government; I wish that we had done oversight in a stronger way.

But this is the amazing thing that has happened. It is absolutely amazing. Those who have voted against the war have been in strong criticism of the President. So almost everything he does, they are critical of. And yet, when they are critical of it and it turns out right, they just kind of fade into the woodwork. They said, do not transfer power to the Iraqis in June, do not rush them. And we did, and it was a huge success, the transfer of power in June of last year. Every critic of the President said do not do it, it will be a failure. When it succeeded, they just acted like nothing happened. Well, a huge thing happened. We transferred power.

I can tell my colleagues that it worked and it was significant because when I was there for one of my visits and I had met with the President and I had met with the Prime Minister and I had met with the foreign minister, the Foreign Minister Negroponte, and what was crucial about the transfer of power, besides giving the Iraqis the authority, was we took it away from Defense to run the government, Mr. Bremmer, and let them fight the war, and we gave it to State Department to be our liaison with a legitimate government, or at least a government that now was in Iraqi hands. I will say legitimate in parentheses since there was not any election.

So we went out on this press conference and there was all this Iraqi press, and I have to tell you, I thought, this is kind of a kick, I am going to have a press conference with Iraqis. The first thing I said was, "we made some mistakes, but." And there was nodding of heads by the Iraqis because I knew that they all agreed and knew that it was a mistake to disband the Army, the police, the Border Patrol and the government, at least most of them felt that way.

Well, the first question was to the Iraqi Foreign Minister, so I stepped aside and he answered the question. I asked, is there another question. The second was to the Foreign Minister. I stepped aside and he answered that. This went on for 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 times and I finally said to Mr. Negroponte, I said, Ambassador, what better proof do we have that the Iraqis believe, and with justification, that their own people are now in charge.

□ 2200

That was a huge, huge success, for which the President basically got no

credit. Then there was the election in January 2005, and all of the critics said do not have this election, it is going to be a big failure. There is going to be violence. It is not going to work.

Well, I was there on election day. And it was one of my most thrilling moments as a Member of Congress, because I was getting affirmation that we were clearly on the right track. Clearly on the right track. I was in Irbil. And I met with the Democratic Institute, and the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute that are funded to help countries all around the world understand democracy.

And in these institutes were not Americans; they were all of the people we had helped in different places, in Yugoslavia and South America. They were all there to help Iraqis. It was thrilling to see all of this world community to come to help.

But at any rate, I am going and witness the vote. And I had a badge on that gave me the privilege of serving, and in Irbil there was this school, and there were three classrooms on one side, and three classrooms on the other. And people were going in, and registration was running pretty well.

Under Saddam if you did not register, you were likely to get killed. So we had a pretty good registration list. But what was amazing was in every one of those rooms the furniture was the same; it was corrugated cardboard, but so firm it was like furniture.

And people were given their local, their state, and their Federal ballot. They went behind a protected area. They voted and then they came up to the person who was right there with the three ballot boxes.

The person took their ballots, folded them up and put them on top of each ballot. And then took their finger and stuck it in the ink jar. And I am thinking, well, this is interesting. You get killed, I am told if you vote, and yet those folks are putting their finger in an ink jar.

And I learned from some from South America, they use that system in South America in some of the countries. If you try to erase the ink it gets darker. The only way you can take it off is to take your finger off. You just have to wait until the skin dies. So it is there for many, many, many days.

And I am watching this. Give the ballot. Put your finger in the ink jar. And I wanted to bond with the Iraqis. I was in a Kurdish village. And I went up, I think somewhat meekly, and I said, would it be all right if I stuck my finger in that ink jar?

Well, the woman who was in charge of the election there looked up at me, looked down at the ink jar, looked up at me again, looked down, then looked up at me again and then she said, no, you are not an Iraqi. I was embarrassed.

Everybody looked at me. I sure was not an Iraqi. And then I welled up with this incredible emotion, for two reasons. The pride that she had, and I was

not one of her. But she was a Kurd, and she said I was not an Iraqi. She did not say I was not a Kurd.

I saw Iraqis line up to vote. They were dressed up. And they brought their men with them, the Iraqi women, because they wanted to vote. And I saw them carry their children, just like we would do.

Later that day, I met with the President of Iraq. The election is in January. This was to elect an assembly which would then select people for a panel for the Constitution, that then had to be ready by September for a vote in October. And he told me he got there half an hour early. And they made him wait a half an hour.

And then he smiled, and he said, is that not terrific? But then he got angry, and he said, I was fined \$1,000 for campaigning the day before the election.

And I said, well, Mr. President what did you do? He described to me what he did. And I am thinking to myself, it sure sounded like campaigning to me. And then he said, But, you know, they fined everybody else too.

And I thought, you know what, this is amazing. When I met with the election officials later that day, I learned there were 160,000 Iraqis who ran this election. Contrary to what my colleague said previously, this was not run by Americans. We taught them, Yugoslavians taught them, South Americans taught them, the English taught them, some in the eastern European nations, other Eastern European nations had come to tell them about democracy.

They set it up, and they ran it almost flawlessly. Frankly, better than happened in some of my own urban communities in my own district. There was immense pride, and there should have been pride. So it took them a while to get their government, but they did. And they were a few weeks late in getting their Constitution.

What did the press say? The press said, they are failing. That is what they said. All of the major newspapers on TV, they are failing. And I am thinking to myself, they have failed because they missed a deadline by a week or two? They failed? So I began to think. Let me think. 1776. Declaration of Independence. Articles of Confederation. Constitution of the United States. I think that was like 13 years.

And then as Condoleezza Rice pointed out to me, besides the failure of the Articles of Confederation, in our Constitution, if you were black you were three-fifths a person and a slave. Women did not have the right to vote. And there were a few other things. We punted on a few issues.

Now, the Iraqis have given women the right to vote. The Iraqis have even guaranteed 25 percent of their seats in their assembly will be women. That is what they have done. The Iraqis have said Sharia law exists if you declare under Shia or Sunni, Sharia law. If you declare you are a Shia or a Sunni.

But if you choose to be under common law, then you are under common law.

They then have tried to draw in the Sunnis, who in the negotiations were allowed to participate even though they did not vote in the last election, they did not vote. But they were still there.

But the Sunnis would tell us that they did not have this authority to say, yes, we put our stamp of approval on this, because they said we were not elected like you were, Shias and Kurds.

But they agreed with so much in private as to what was done. And the Shias and the Kurds kept trying to say, well, if we do this, do this. And then we hear in the press that somehow this is a bad thing. And then I began to think about our Constitution. When we had the Constitution, it did not include the 10 Bill of Rights, and fortunately, Virginia, in particular, said we want the Bill of Rights.

And Jefferson said, we want the Bill of Rights. We had to change our Constitution 10 times in order to become these United States. We had to amend what had been already agreed to. And yet we are not even saying that the Iraqis can do the same thing? And we are saying they have to do it in 2½ to 3 years, when we took many, many years, and along the way had the Articles of Confederation.

So I look at the transfer of power in June of 2004 and say what a huge thing. Then the elections in 2005. So what about the election that just happened? I kept turning to the press to see what happened. And I did not hear what happened. And then it dawned on me: you know, it must have been a success, because the press was not talking about it. What a horrible thing to say and have to admit, but it is so true.

If it is a success, it is not going to be talked about, which is to say, frankly, if the press moves to al-Kut, that is where the bombing would be, not in Baghdad.

If the press moved to Basra, that is where all of the bombing would be. If the press moved to Kadhimain, that is where all of bombing would be because the bombing is not for domestic consumption; it is for international consumption.

The Iraqis are used to bombings. They have 400,000 people in the killing fields. They have the dead in the Kurdish areas because of the chemical weapons Saddam used. I met a woman who for 10 years was not allowed to go out of her house. I do not say out of her property, out of her house. Because her parents were so fearful, given her looks, she was attractive, that Uday and Qusay would choose her as their woman of pleasure some night, Saddam's two sons.

It was a horrific place to be. And now Iraqis are forming their government. When I asked Iraqis during any number of my 10 visits, what is your biggest fear, their biggest fear is, and it is hard to tell you how I feel when I say it, but

they say that you will leave us. That you will have us taste what you have, give us an idea, give us a sense of how life could be without Saddam, give us a sense to have our own destiny determined by the majority, that you will leave us.

I say to them, we will not leave you. Now, you know what, I do not think we will. But when I hear the talk and I look at CNN and I look at other newscasts and I hear the blind, we are in a mess in Iraq, and I see the transfer of power, the election in January, the referendum now, and what I believe will be a huge participation in December, I am saying, I am in awe of what the Iraqis have done.

I am in awe of what our Americans have done. Because while we never should have disbanded the army, the police, the border patrol, their government, we did, and the Americans, the limited number of Americans had to fill in the void and pay a huge price.

But they also have done something else besides trying to maintain security, trying to teach about democracy, trying to build an economy. They have trained their army, their police, their border patrol, they are training their government officials.

Six months ago, I would have had to tell you honestly, and I would have been honest, that the police were not professionals, because they were not. They did not have enough training. They did not have enough experience. They did not have enough equipment. But now we are giving them the training, the equipment. They have the cars, the uniforms, the places, the weapons, the training clearly; and now they are getting the experience.

They are getting the experience. The military was able in the last town that we were able to free, the Iraqis went in. We followed. The Iraqis freed the town. We followed. The bottom line is, we followed and the Iraqis are now able to hold it.

Let me get toward the conclusion here and just say to you that we may fail or we may succeed, but we have a better chance. We have a better chance in Iraq than we had when we formed our own country.

Dave McCullough in "1776" said we needed lots of miracles. We needed the miracle to make sure the wind was blowing in the right way so George Washington could leave and escape the British in New York.

We needed a miracle to get Massachusetts and Virginia to agree. We did not have three parties. We did not have the Kurds, the Shias and the Sunnis. We had 13 very independent States. We had large States; we had small States. How are you going to get them all to agree? Are Rhode Island and Delaware going to agree to let Virginia and New York or Pennsylvania govern? No. But we did it. They do not need a miracle. What they do need is a little more time.

What they do need is the possibility that they can have their elections, that

they can refine their Constitution, and that they can make sure their military has the capability to provide the security.

So when people say, what is our exit strategy? I say it a hundred times, it is very simple. And when they say we do not have an exit strategy, that is simply not true. We have had an exit strategy from day one. It has been revised a few times, but we have had an exit strategy. It has been revised because we underestimated the strength of the insurgency. We underestimated the consequence of disbanding their army, their police and their border patrol; but our strategy is so basic, so simple, and it does not need to be doubted.

Our strategy is to train their police, to train their border patrol, to train their military so they have the capability to keep order. To train their government so that they not only know about majority rule, but minority rights. To give them more time to experience the government, to give them more time to have their military be engaged in a fight with help from the United States. Will we leave? We will leave probably sooner than we should.

□ 2215

In my judgment, Senator MCCAIN and others have been right. We have been understaffed in Iraq. We will leave probably sooner than we should but we will not leave completely because Iraqis will still need logistical support. Their military will not have the cooks, the people who can do the transportation, and all the other things that they need besides that fighting force. They will not have the air power that they will need. And frankly, I do not think they are going to want us to leave from Iraq completely when they have neighbors like Syria, the Turks who fear the Kurds, the Iranians that fear the Kurds and are trying to wrap their arms around the Shias, and the Saudis who do not want democracy to succeed.

When my colleague, the previous speaker, talked about how people predicted bad things, I know darn well that the President of Egypt predicted the election in January would not succeed. He was wrong. He predicted the constitution would not pass and I think he is wrong. And I think it relates more to not the United States but more to the idea that Sunnis are having to give up power in Iraq to Shias, and that is of concern to many.

Have there been other benefits from our being there? I do not think that you would have seen Qadhafi and Libya do a 180 degree turn. It was around the time we captured Saddam Hussein that Qadhafi I think probably thought, you know, I have billions of dollars. Why would I want to end up like Saddam Hussein? Why in the world would I want that to happen? And in Syria even the Israelis were saying the Syrians will not leave Lebanon but they left Lebanon. I do not think they would have left Lebanon if we were not in

Iraq. Fortunately, the Syrians fear we might do something in Syria.

Now to some in my district they think that would be the craziest thing in the world to do something in Syria. No, the craziest thing would be for the Syrians to fear that we would not do something. The craziest thing would be for us to say that we will not do something in Syria. The smartest thing is to keep the Syrians wondering so we can have a change of behavior without using military.

When I met with the Syrian ambassador he said, We want to be your friends. Just tell us what we are doing wrong and we will stop. And I said to the ambassador, Mr. Ambassador, we will not want to tell you the things we know you are doing wrong and then just have you stop the things we know you are doing wrong. We want to you stop even the things we do not know you are doing.

We want you to stop allowing insurgents to come into Damascus who are terrorist bombers who then come into Iraq to blow themselves up. When my colleague said only 10 percent of the insurgency are foreigners. I thought, yes, there are only 10 percent of them but 98 percent of them are bombers, people who blow themselves up. If we could get rid of that 10 percent, we would get rid of 98 percent of the suicide bombers. Most Iraqis do not have any interest in blowing themselves up.

So there is more I could say about Iraq. I am in awe of what our troops have done. I am in awe of the Iraqi men and women that I have met. I believe that most Iraqis who are involved in this government believe they are the Madisons, the Benjamin Franklins, the George Washingtons. They believe they are helping to create a new nation that not unlike its fledgling democracy in the United States, where you could have said, you know, tell me a country that has been a democracy, a country where there have been some States. Tell me a country. You could have used the same argument against the United States. Nobody has it. It is not a natural thing. We in this world have kings and queens and dictators.

Well, what I found at least with the Iraqis is they take to democracy. They love the debate, the dialogue. They love to barter. They love it. And there are a lot of things we could criticize what they have done, but I think in two and a half years they do not need a miracle, but they make me feel like they are doing something that will have unbelievable significance in the long run for peace and prosperity.

PROGRESS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAYS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I have to indicate what an inspiring talk that was that the gentleman from Con-

necticut (Mr. SHAYS) has provided this body and those who all may be tuned in. It was very touching, extremely informative, and most helpful; and it was a pleasure to hear.

As I think about some of the comments that have been said in recent days regarding the Iraqis and the Iraqi government and those people who are trying to become a self-governing people, I am struck and I am brought back, as the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) was, back to the days of this country's battle for independence, and all the naysayers that were around. It is estimated that perhaps less than a third were actually those who were actively involved in seeking independence and truly believed in the cause.

Having been in Iraq earlier this year, after the January elections, having seen what the Iraqis were getting a glimpse of, it is like being a teacher and seeing the light come on with a student. They get it. They understand. Make no mistake, there are corrupt people in Iraq just as there are in America. There have been elections stolen in America. There have been, I am sure, improper voters everywhere there has ever been a vote. But this is truly an awesome historic time.

Could it fail in Iraq? It sure could. Could it fail for sure if we abandon what has been done in the cause for which so many have already given their lives? It sure could. It could fail. And it is heartbreaking when people say, let us just get out before the job is done and let us just get out, meaning that those people who laid down their lives in service to this country, in helping to spread freedom and fighting insurgency and terrorists in other streets so we do not have those fights here in this country, we will, we have, but the major battles have been overseas because the terrorists get it.

They understand once the seed of democracy begins to bloom in the Middle East, then it grows and it spreads seeds that then grow up and democracy spreads because once people get that glimpse of self-government it is an incredible thing. Just like John Adams wrote his wife, Abigail, and explained, the thing that philosophers through the ages have talked about, this idea that people could govern themselves is just within our grasp. Oh, to be living in this time when it is so close within our grasp.

Well, we have been the beneficiaries of that. As I spoke to people in Iraq one gentleman, tears began to come as he talked about how brutal and barbaric it had been in Iraq under Saddam and how because of Saddam's spies that were everywhere, neighbors could no longer trust neighbors. They could not speak what they thought without worrying about somebody turning them in. They could not make anybody mad in the neighborhood because then somebody might enter a false report to get them arrested just out of spite. Even the spies had to be careful because they